

Notes and Quotes - Jesus Heals a Leper

Is 61:1-3

The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach good news to the poor.

He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners,^{a 2} to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn,³ and provide for those who grieve in Zion— to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair.

They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the LORD for the display of his glory.

Mk 1:40-45 - ⁴⁰ A leper came to him and begged him falling on his knees, "If you are willing, you can make me clean." ⁴¹ Moved with compassion, Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" ⁴² Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cleansed. ⁴³ Jesus sent him away at once with a strong warning: ⁴⁴ "See that you don't tell this to anyone. But go, show yourself to the priest and offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded for your cleansing, as a testimony to them." ⁴⁵ Instead he went out and began to talk freely, spreading the news. As a result, Jesus could no longer enter a town openly but stayed outside in desolate places. Yet the people still came to him from everywhere.

I have discovered that even though a person may have severe brain damage, that is not the source of his or her greatest pain. The greatest pain is rejection, the feeling that nobody really wants you 'like that.' The feeling that you are seen as ugly, dirty, a burden, of no value. That is the pain I have discovered in the hearts of our people.

Jean Vanier

I often act with pity. I give some money to a beggar on the streets of Toronto or New York, but I do not look him in his eyes, sit down with him, or talk with him. I am too busy to really pay attention to the man who reaches out to me. My money replaces my personal attention and gives me an excuse to walk on. - Henry Nouwen

It is not love in the abstract that counts. (People) have loved a cause as they have loved a woman. They have loved the brotherhood, the workers, the poor, the oppressed - but they have not loved (people); they have not loved the least of these. They have not loved "personally." It is hard to love. It is the hardest thing in the world, naturally speaking. Have you ever read Tolstoy's *Resurrection*? He tells of political prisoners in a long prison train, enduring chains and persecution for the love of their brothers, ignoring those same brothers on the long trek to Siberia. It is never the brothers right next to us, but the brothers in the abstract that are easy to love. - Dorothy Day

Sunday Circle Questions
(Feel free to change these as you like)

How has God spoken to you today?

Who are your 'lepers' (i.e. - those you are very uncomfortable with)?

- Why are they your 'lepers'? What makes them so in your eyes?
- Do you have any stories to share of your encounter with the marginal people of our culture and society? What was it like?

What may be some of the things *in you* that cause you to have less compassion for them?

Read Dorothy Day's quote again. How does her charge to NOT to live in abstract love challenge you?

- What are some of the things that get in the way of making your love for the marginal (e.g. homeless, immigrants, refugees, handicapped, etc.) more concrete?